

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
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AMEMBASSY RABAT
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1857

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT--PARA FIVE LINE THIRTEEN ADDED)

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, AG, SP, OAU
SUBJECT: REPORTED OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE VOTE BRINGS
PROTEST IN SPAIN

REF: MADRID 1786

1. ACCORDING TO SPANISH PRESS REPORTS, THE OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE MEETING IN TRIPOLI HAS DECIDED TO RECOMMEND TO THE OAU THAT ALL MEMBER COUNTRIES GRANT ECONOMIC AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT TO THE CANARIES' INDEPENDENCE GROUP (MPAIAC) HEADED BY ANTONIO CUBILLO. THE COMMITTEE ALSO RECOMMENDED THAT SPAIN BE REQUESTED TO RECONSIDER ITS NEGATIVE POSITION REGARDING A VISIT TO THE CANARIES BY AN OAU INQUIRY COMMITTEE. THIS REPORTED DECISION HAS SET OFF A STORM OF PROTEST BY THE GOS AND ALL MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES IN SPAIN AS WELL AS BY THE
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SPANISH PRESS, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE THEMES OF "INTOLERABLE INTERFERENCE" AND THE UNDENIABLE SPANISHNESS OF THE CANARY ISLANDS.

2. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ISSUED A STATEMENT FEB 20 DECLARING THAT WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO WHAT IT MIGHT WISH TO SAY ONCE THE OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' DECISION AS TO

WHETHER IT WOULD SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE LIBERATION COMMITTEE WERE KNOWN, "THE GOS REITERATES WITH MAXIMUM FIRMNESS ITS TOTAL REJECTION OF PROPOSALS, DECLARATIONS, OR ACTIONS WHICH SUPPOSE A GREAT DISTORTION OF REALITY AND ATTACK IN AN INTOLERABLE MANNER THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY OF SPAIN".

3. THE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES ALSO ISSUED STRONG STATEMENTS: THE GOVERNMENT UCD WARNED THAT AN ADVERSE DECISION BY THE OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS COULD THREATEN SPANISH COOPERATION WITH AFRICAN COUNTRIES; THE SOCIALIST PSOE (PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION PARTY) CALLED THE LIBERATION COMMITTEE DECISION "GRAVE AND INTOLERABLE", AND STRESSED ITS OPPOSITION TO ANY RECOGNITION OF OR SUPPORT FOR MPAIAC; THE PCE DUBBED THE DECISION "SCANDALOUS AND INTOLERABLE" (AND ALSO EMPHASIZED THE SPANISHNESS OF THE CANARIES); THE CONSERVATIVE AP CALLED IT "A MONSTROSITY". NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARIES ALSO JOINED IN THE ATTACK.

4. A DEFENSE MINISTRY SPOKESMAN RECALLED THE DECLARATION MADE DURING A RECENT VISIT TO THE CANARIES BY DEFENSE MINISTER (AND FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER) LT. GENERAL GUTIERREZ MELLADO: "SPAIN WILL DEFEND THE CANARIES AT ANY COST." THE MOROCCAN EMBASSY, FOR ITS PART, PUT OUT A STATEMENT REITERATING ITS GOVERNMENT'S OFFICIAL POSITION THAT THE CANARIES ARE SPANISH, AND DECLARING THAT MOROCCO

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"IS NOT DISPOSED TO GIVE ANY KIND OF FACILITIES TO (MPAIAC) SUPPORTING THE STANCE TAKEN BY THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT".

5. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S CHIEF FOR NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST (CAJAL) TOLD US FEB 21 THAT THE GOS WOULD MAKE NO FURTHER STATEMENT UNTIL THE OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS HAD DECIDED ON THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT. REGARDING PRESS ASSERTIONS THAT MPAIAC'S MAIN SUPPORT HAD COME FROM ALGERIA, LIBYA, ANGOLA, TANZANIA, AND MOZAMBIQUE, CAJAL SAID THE TENTATIVE INDICATIONS THEY HAD WERE THAT THE COMMITTEE DECISION HAD BEEN UNANIMOUS. THE GOS BELIEVED SOME SUCH DECISION WAS TO BE EXPECTED AT SOME POINT, CAJAL SAID, GIVEN THE GUT APPEAL OF DE-COLONIZATION ISSUES IN AFRICA AND THE DEMONSTRATED TENDENCY OF THE MORE ZEALOUS COUNTRIES TO TAKE AN ACTIVIST, INCLUSIVE APPROACH. THE GOS WAS NEVERTHELESS SURPRISED, CAJAL SAID, THAT THE DECISION HAD COME SO SHARPLY AND SO SOON.

6. COMMENT. CAJAL MADE NO SPECIFIC PREDICTION REGARDING THE OAU FOREIGN MINISTERS' REACTION TO THE COMMITTEE POSITION, BUT IT APPEARED CLEAR FROM HIS REMARKS THAT THE GOS HOPES THAT THE COMMITTEE'S POSITION WILL NOT BECOME

THAT OF THE OAU. THE GOS ALSO DOUBTLESS FURTHER HOPES IN THIS CONNECTION THAT ITS RECENT DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS ON THE ISSUE (MADRID 1147) WILL BEAR FRUIT. HOWEVER, WHATEVER THE OAU DECIDES, ALL POLITICAL GROUPS ACROSS THE SPECTRUM ARE UNANIMOUS IN UPHOLDING THE VIEW THAT THE CANARY ISLANDS WILL CONTINUE TO REMAIN AN INTEGRAL PART OF SPAIN. STABLER

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